

New pastoral year inaugurated at the Shrine with examples of hope in everyday life

A round table discussion on the theme “Pilgrims of Hope” started the new pastoral year, which will be lived in harmony with the Jubilee Year in the Church.

It was in a spirit of reflection and sharing that the new pastoral year was inaugurated at the Shrine of Fatima on Saturday afternoon, 30 November. The programme began with the inauguration of the new temporary exhibition “Serving, the Only Preaching” and continued with a round table discussion on the theme of the pastoral year, whose guests included journalist Alberta Marques Fernandes, the regional representative for the Centre of the Portugal Social Innovation Programme, Alexandra Neves, and television presenter Jorge Gabriel.

In his opening remarks, the rector of the Shrine of Fatima contextualised the theme of the new year, presented the main objectives for 2024-2025 and previewed some of the activities planned and the dynamics that will serve to improve the experience of the Jubilee Year in Cova da Iria, in full harmony with the whole Church.

Hope, based on the message of Fatima, will be the focus of this year, which is

particularly pertinent in light of the current political instability, Fr Carlos Cabecinhas said.

“Fatima is an event of hope, reaffirming God’s love and care for humankind in all times and places, with particular attention and diligence in the most dramatic moments of its history, such as this moment we are living, in which the theme of war is overshadowing our days,” the rector said, presenting Fatima as an anchor that “neither deceives nor disappoints”.



“Fatima tells us that we are called to be men and women of hope who, at the school of Mary, like the Holy Shepherds, learn to entrust their lives to God, certain that they will not be disappointed or see their hopes dashed.”

Among the main activities planned for the new pastoral year, the Shrine’s participation in the Marian Spirituality Day in Rome stands out, strengthening the link with the Holy Year.

At the Cova da Iria, pilgrims will be offered a prayer itinerary; catechesis will also be available on the avenues of the Prayer Area and, throughout the year, a musical programme will enhance the experience of the Jubilee of the Church, which will be marked in the Prayer Area with the display of the festive portico, which was there during the year of the Centenary of the Apparitions.

As for education and reflection, the cycle of meetings at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary will continue, offering moments of reflection and musical enjoyment; the Summer Course for researchers will also be held, and several proposals will be promoted within the School of the Shrine.

During 2025, a prayer of Consecration to Our Lady will be read at the end of the celebrations and, in October, the first Meeting of Congregations and Religious Institutes with a charism inspired by Fatima will be organised.

A conversation inspired by everyday hope

The opening remarks by the rector of the Shrine of Fatima were followed by a round table in which Alberta Marques Fernandes, Alexandra Neves and Jorge Gabriel, moderated by the director of the Social Communication Office, Patrícia Duarte, offered to share frankly about how they live their faith and how they renew hope every day in their professions and projects.

“Every day we have to make the Word our daily use. The Little Shepherds proved to us that if we are more naive and closer, we can pass on the Word and not create barriers to love, which is the key to breaking down our dimension,” said television presenter Jorge Gabriel, emphasising the importance of small fraternal attitudes to achieve hope.





Alexandra Neves shared the work she does at the Dream Academy, where, through an immersive 4D experience, she transports people at the end of their lives to Fatima, and emphasised the importance of hope for those who find themselves in this circumstance.

“What I’ve learnt in my volunteer work with people at the end of their lives is that hope has no time limit and can be worked on in hours. In this end-of-life process, hope has to be worked on, because although the body is decaying, the spiritual part is always growing,” said the guest, who emphasised reconciliation as an action to renew hope.

Journalist Alberta Marques Fernandes, who said she felt like she was on a pilgrimage, “both in the newsroom and in personal life”, emphasised the role of prayer as a means of renewing hope in an increasingly polarised society.

“At a time when the world seems to be turned upside down, the first thing Christians should do is pray and believe in the power of prayer. It’s no coincidence that Our Lady spoke to the Little Shepherds of Peace at a time when the world was very polarised. This

is the essential thing. The first thing to do is pray and pray and invoke the hope and joy of faith," the journalist advised.

The opening session continued with a musical performance by the Schola Cantorum Pastorinhos de Fatima, an ensemble from the Shrine's Sacred Music Service and the Fatima Shrine Choir.



At the end, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima spoke of the most dramatic places in the world today, emphasising the importance of hope and calling for everyone to take part in the dynamics of this pastoral year.

"We need to sow, we need to repair, we need to create reasons for hope for our Shrine and for the Church," Bishop José Ornelas said.

After a first year in which the pilgrims were "Called to Encounter", the biennium "Encountering Hope" is now moving forward under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope", with the aim of deepening the role of Fatima as a source of hope, starting from the pilgrim dimension of the act of evangelisation.

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